Back up your Mac with Time Machine

macOS · https://cleversupport.ca/docs/macos/back-up-your-mac-with-time-machine/

If you have a USB drive or other external storage device, you can use Time Machine to automatically back up your files, including apps, music, photos, email, and documents.



Connect a storage device to your Mac

Connect an external storage device, such as a USB drive or Thunderbolt drive.

- Use a storage device with at least twice the storage capacity of your Mac. For example, if your Mac has 1TB of storage, your backup disk should ideally have at least 2TB of storage. If Time Machine needs more storage space, your Mac will let you know.
- Use your Time Machine backup disk only for Time Machine backups, not for storage of other files.*

Set up the storage device as your backup disk

Learn the setup steps in your version of macOS, or follow these steps in macOS Ventura or later:

1. From the Apple menu in the corner of your screen, choose System Settings.
2. Click General in the sidebar, then click Time Machine on the right.
3. Click Add Backup Disk, or click the Add button (+).
4. Select your connected storage device and click Set Up Disk.
5. During setup:
    - Your Mac might ask if you want to erase the storage device so that it can be used for Time Machine. Either erase it or select a different backup disk or volume.
    - Your Mac might ask whether this computer should claim existing backups created on a different computer. Claim the backups if you want them to become part of the backups for this Mac.

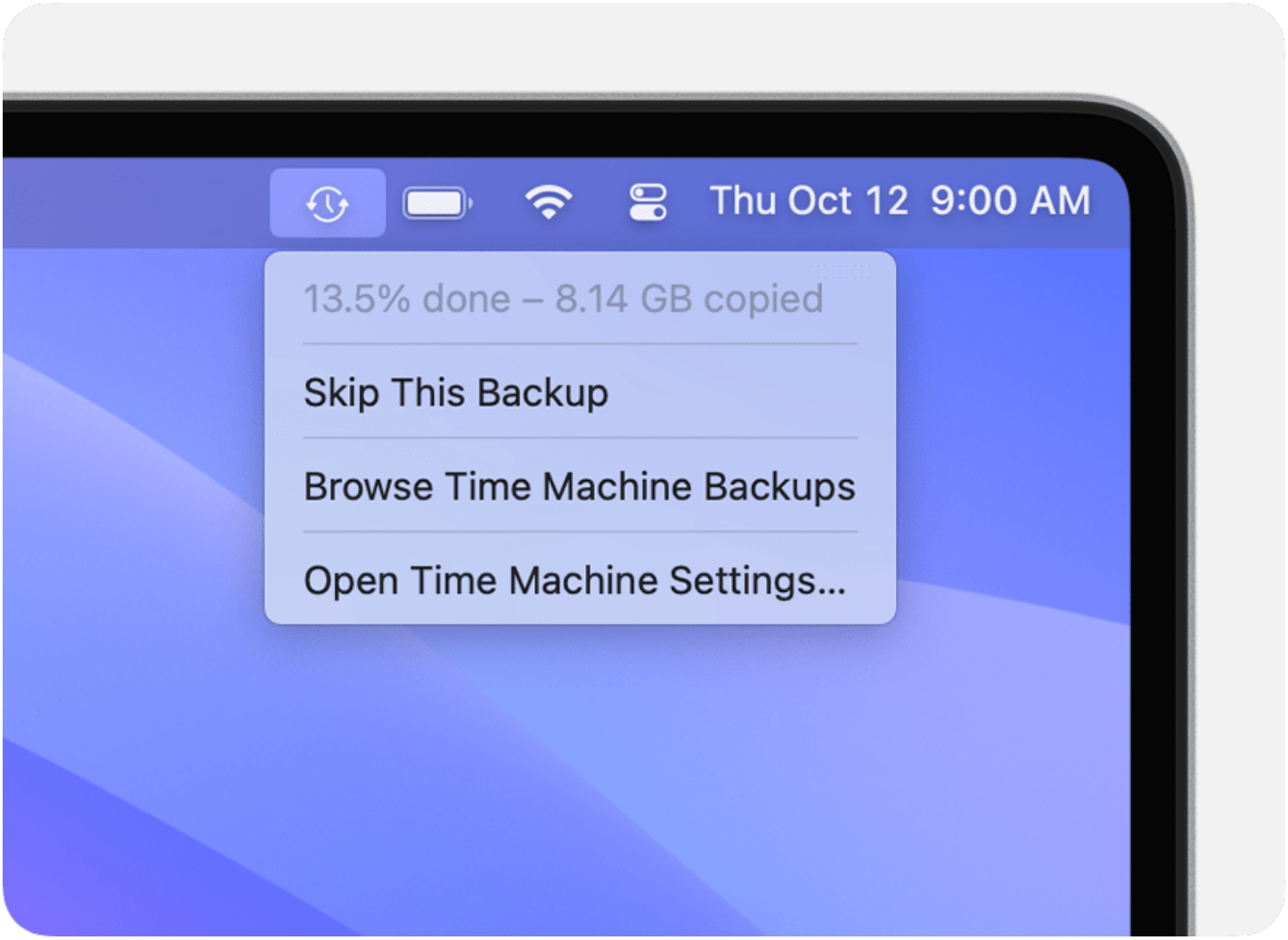
After setup, your Mac immediately begins using the storage device to make backups.

Make a backup

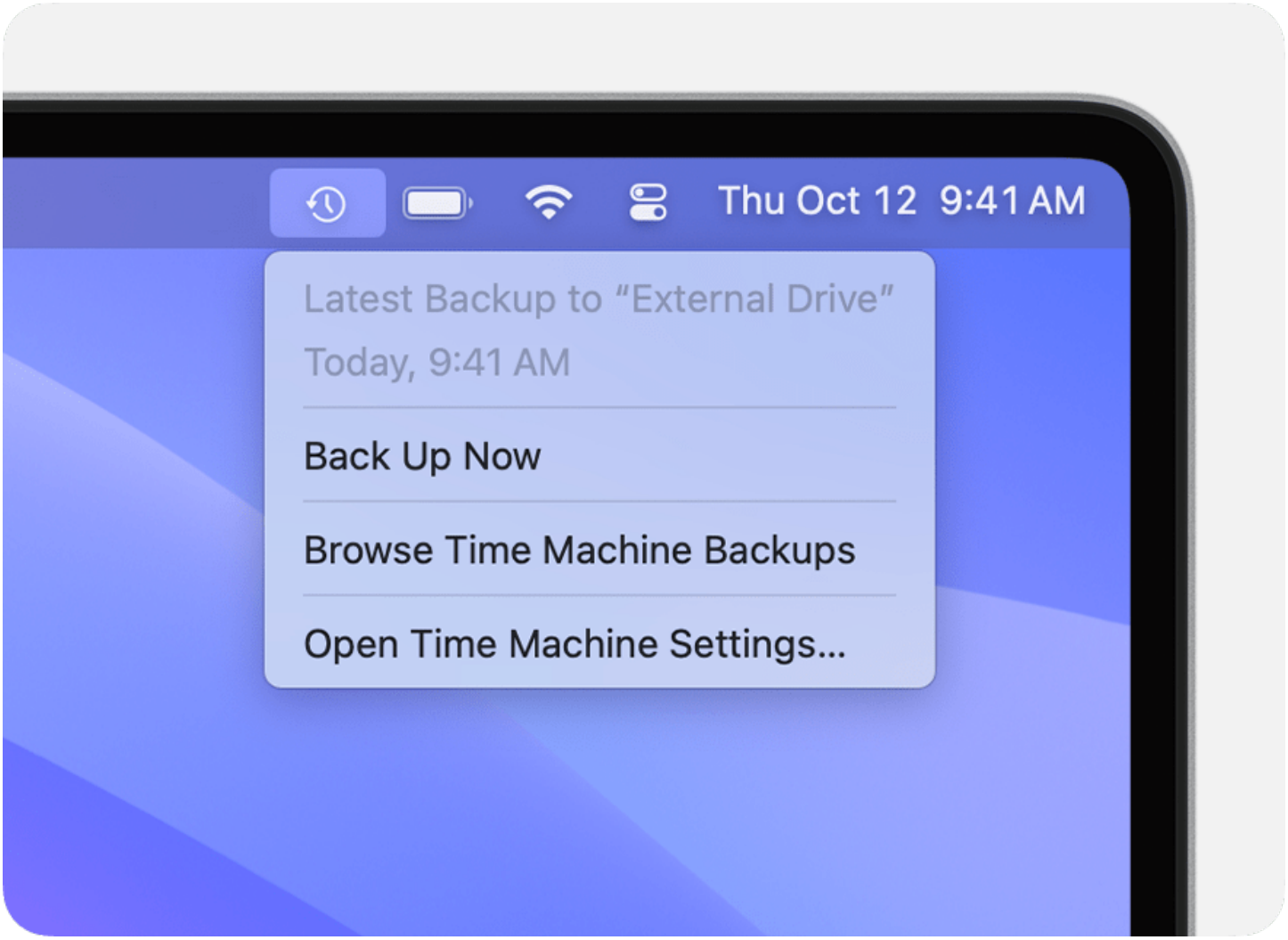
To back up now, choose Back Up Now from the Time Machine menu  in the menu bar.

Or wait for the next automatic backup.

Use the same menu to stop or skip a backup or check its progress. The top of the menu shows how much of the current backup is done, or the date and time of the latest backup:



Backup is in progress



Backup is done

If you don't see this menu, make sure that Control Center settings (macOS Ventura or later) or Desktop & Menu Bar preferences (macOS Monterey or earlier) are set to show Time Machine in the menu bar.

Backup frequency and duration

Time Machine automatically makes hourly backups for the past 24 hours, daily backups for the past month, and weekly backups for all previous months. The oldest backups are deleted when your backup disk is full.

To change the backup frequency in macOS Ventura or later, choose Open Time Machine Settings from the Time Machine menu


. Click Options, then choose a setting from the “Back up frequency” menu.

The first backup might take longer than you expect, but you can continue using your Mac while a backup is underway. Time Machine backs up only the files that changed since the previous backup, so future backups will be faster.